

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS  
LUBBOCK DIVISION

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

STEPHEN BLAKE JOHNSTON

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CASE NO: 5:24-CR-099-H-BV-2

**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION ON PLEA OF GUILTY  
BEFORE UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE**

The defendant, by consent and under the authority of *United States v. Dees*, 125 F.3d 261 (5th Cir. 1997), appeared with counsel for the purpose of entering a plea of guilty under Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. This Report and Recommendation is submitted to the Court under 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(3).

The defendant was placed under oath and examined in open court concerning the subjects of Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure. The defendant was advised regarding each subject and affirmed his/her understanding of each subject. Pursuant to a written plea agreement with the government, the defendant pled guilty to Count Five of the Indictment, charging a violation of 21 U.S.C. §§ 841(a)(1) and 841(b)(1)(C)—Distribution and Possession with Intent to Distribute Methamphetamine.

After examining the defendant under oath, I find that:

1. The defendant, upon advice of counsel, consented orally and in writing to enter this guilty plea before a magistrate judge subject to final approval and sentencing by the presiding district judge;
2. The defendant fully understands the nature of the charges, including each essential element of the offense(s) charged, and the associated penalties;
3. The defendant fully understands the terms of the plea agreement and plea agreement supplement;

4. The defendant understands all his/her constitutional and statutory rights and wishes to waive these rights, including the right to a trial by jury and the right to appear before a United States district judge;
5. The defendant's plea is made freely and voluntarily;
6. The defendant is competent to enter this plea of guilty;
7. There is a factual basis to support this plea; and
8. The ends of justice are served by acceptance of the defendant's plea of guilty.

Based on the above, I recommend that the defendant's guilty plea be accepted, that the defendant be adjudged guilty, and that sentence be imposed accordingly.

Although I have conducted these proceedings and accepted the defendant's guilty plea, the United States district judge has the power to review my actions and possesses final decision-making authority in this proceeding. Thus, if the defendant has any objections to these findings or any other action of the undersigned, he is required to make those known to the United States district judge within fourteen (14) days of today.

Signed January 13, 2025.

  
AMANDA 'AMY' R. BURCH  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE